

Merseyside
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BULLETIN

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♦ **NEW YEAR ISSUE** ♦

**LOOKING BACK ON
 THE SIXTIES**

with John Harney

**Looking Forward
 to the 70's**



MORE FROM WARMINSTER



EDITORIAL

Small UFO Journals

In the latest issue of DUFORA Journal, John Cleary-Baker writes: "Nowadays, it seems to me, every youngster who has read a couple of popular books on Flying Saucers feels competent to launch a magazine on the subject, or else found a society with an imposing title and awe-inspiring objects, but no money at all. There already exists a diversity of UFO societies and publications in this country. Why fritter away money and effort on ephemeral ventures when responsible UFO-research organisations are languishing for lack of adequate means and assistance?"

There is no convincing reason why any person, young or not, should not produce a UFO magazine, if he has the time and inclination to do so. Many ufologists live too far from London to attend DUFORA meetings and the production of a modest UFO bulletin is often, for them, the most effective means of keeping in touch with fellow enthusiasts.

It is true that the standard of writing in many of these journals is really appalling, but for those who are prepared to learn from their mistakes, the experience of producing such a bulletin can prove to be very educational.

Nobody is forced to buy or exchange with a magazine which he considers to be not worth reading and such publications soon die a natural death through a process of natural selection.

ADVANCE OR RETREAT -- A Reappraisal for 1970

by Alan W. Sharp

Two recent articles in the literature (1,2) have brought to the fore a conflict which seems to have reared its head from time to time ever since the beginning of serious UFO investigation over twenty years ago.

I refer to the confrontation between what might be described as the scientific and non-scientific schools of thought respectively, although this method of grouping is too stark to be completely satisfactory. Another pair of classes would be the objective and the subjective, though by and large the line of demarcation would fall in the same place in each case.

In order to put the matter in some sort of perspective it is of importance to ask the questions: "Why do people become interested in the subject of unidentified flying objects?" and: "What sorts of people become interested in this subject?"

The answer to the second question is supplied in large measure by the answer to the first and both replies have much in common with the answers to similar questions posed in connection with other interesting subjects of general public concern such, for example, as astronomy and extra-sensory perception, to mention but two which arouse wide interest.

First of all it is obvious that such things appeal to many people with active, enquiring minds, both those who have been educated in some scientific discipline and those who have had no such upbringing.

Secondly, there is the appeal of the unusual, the macabre and the unknown.

Third is what may be described as the mystical and quasi-religious connotation in an era of difficult problems with which many people feel themselves either incapable of grappling, or out of tune with the adopted solutions.

Fourth is the declining role of the amateur in many important and attractive disciplines, which leads to a desire to escape the continually expanding zone where professionals hog the limelight and resist the participation in their lore of other

members of the community.

Fifth is what may be called the "cank appeal".

Sixth is the general intellectual interest of a fresh topic which comes at a time when society seems to be increasingly orientated towards the reward of manual pursuits. This last may tend to explain the disproportionately large membership of the disillusioned "middle class" in the ranks of the UFO faithful.

From the preceding analysis it is not hard to see why ufologists approach the subject from divers viewpoints and why many interpretations border on the mystic and occult. It is always tempting to eschew the rigorous demands of objectivity by invoking the supernatural when the going becomes a little rough.

In addition it is hardly surprising that there should be a reaction against objectivity when so many years of unremitting toil have produced so meagre a harvest of concrete results. Nevertheless the swing to the subjective can be overemphasized, for irrationality has always been a marked feature of the UFO scene, greatly to the detriment of the subject and the displeasure of its more sensible devotees.

The plethora of highly imaginative contact cases and tales of romantic rides in sophisticated spaceships makes it extremely difficult to separate fiction from fact and has necessitated the psychological investigation of observers of UFO phenomena themselves in an attempt to weed out the spurious from the real. The great snag about this, of course, is that the remaining reports may be poor in quality or may be explained in terms of reasonably well-understood causes, of natural or man-made origin. One interesting thing about a rigorous investigation of UFO sightings is the insight which it gives into the evaluation of peculiar events in the past history of mankind. Human beings seem to be sadly prone to wishful thinking and the fecund production of miraculous events. Such things are all very well when everyone understands the rules and conventions of the game, but have obvious drawbacks when people begin to accept them at their face value.

This is why persons like myself look somewhat wryly at the wild orgies of sightings associated with Salisbury Plain. Skywatches there are great fun and one meets some very pleasant individuals in piquant surroundings. The mind is stimulated, yet relaxed, and visits are a welcome diversion from everyday activities. On the other hand, the alleged sightings and reports now emanating from this locality should be treated with an amiable reserve.

There is in the area a certain undercurrent of mystical and supernatural belief which is a good deal less edifying than anything connected with UFO investigation there, and it is against the infiltration of similar ideas into our subject that responsible ufologists must be on their guard. Unfortunately there are, among the ranks of the faithful, some notorious advocates of mysticism and anti-science.

Hence the emphasis must be placed firmly on strictly objective reporting and evaluation even at the risk of offending the purveyors of subjectivist nonsense.

The psychological investigations now in vogue may be of interest and value, but in the UFO context they are only a tool to separate the real from the spurious, the important from the irrelevant. If, in the process of separation, the evidence for extraterrestrial visitation disappears, that will be the end as far as this commentator is concerned, for he views the subterranean and parallel universe notions as completely unrealistic. Nor is he much impressed by the "folk-lore and fairies" approach. Interesting as such things may be in their own right their proper context would seem to be history, pre-history and social anthropology, rather than UFO investigation.

In summary, then, the way forward is clear. Mysticism must be eschewed. Objectivity must be the watchword. Scientific evaluation must be the goal. The extraterrestrial hypothesis must be staunchly adhered to as the fundamental precept. Otherwise we must be resigned to the investigation of natural and man-made phenomena and should re-align our thinking accordingly. A not impossible

eventuality, it is only fair to remark.

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THE SEVENTIES -- A Prognostication

by John A. Rimmer

Ufology is a field that is over-endowed with prophets. Every year since the concept of the UFO was evolved has been heralded as the year the Great Revelation was going to take place, according to one writer or another. In the sixties we had been promised the End of the World several times, a number of varieties of World War III, the End of Civilization-As-We-Know-It, the Second Coming, and Mass Landings in Central Park, New York. Latest despatches from AP, UPI, and the New China News Agency reveal that few if any of these events have taken place. It is therefore with courage verging on foolhardiness that I step out onto the thin ice of prophecy.

I can reveal that the Great Revelation will not take place in the seventies. (Remember, you read it here first!) Whether this is because it is a long time a-coming, or just because there is no Great Revelation, it is not my job at this time to speculate. One great revelation will be made by the United States (or British, Russian, or Panamanian) Government, who will deny that they have ever been interested in UFOs, that there are no UFOs, that the whole thing is total foolishness, and to prove they are not interested they have commissioned the University of Nantucket to dismiss the whole matter for a little under half-a-million dollars. In contrast, deep-digging newshounds will reveal that the Buenos Aires municipal police department is holding three UFOs captive in a disused tram depot. In America, men in black reports and strange telephone calls will become so commonplace that the telephone companies will start Dial-an-Alien services for ufologists feeling left out of things. In England, Warminster will rival Stratford-upon-Avon as a tourist attraction, and the local papers will carry irate letters about tea and Wimpey stalls on Cradle Hill. Small news items on page three of the Daily Telegraph will give tantalizing snippets of information about large numbers of two-headed dwarfs who ran about the streets of Caracas for three days, without inviting any commotion. Nothing more will be heard about this. Continuing its well established tradition the Merseyside UFO Bulletin will not actually publish any reports about UFOs on Merseyside.

Is the coming decade then, humour apart, going to be nothing more than a slightly more spectacular repeat of the sixties? Certainly it will be in part. The pot-boilers and tedious re-hashers will turn out numerous volumes of paperback trivia. One can certainly expect the usual amount of bureaucratic double-talk from public agencies; and it is improbable that the public attitude of amused scepticism will undergo any major change. However, projecting into the seventies a number of already perceptible trends a rather more hopeful aspect seems to present itself.

This Bulletin, along with a number of others, has been advocating a more open, liberal attitude towards ufology; and suggesting that the interplanetary hypothesis is only one possible explanation among others. It would now appear that such an approach to the problem is gathering strength. In the seventies this trend will continue, possibly producing much new information that will be valuable not only to ufologists, but to students of the mind, folklore, and other disciplines not perhaps immediately apparent. In the seventies a lot of extremely interesting articles are going to appear in the pages of UFO magazines. However, alongside this new, liberal approach, there is already emerging a backlash,

comparable to the right wing reaction in contemporary political thought. Two articles in a recent FSR take critics of the interplanetary hypothesis to task. The seventies may see a gulf opening between the 'liberal' and 'right' wings of the subject. One would hope that such a division will not result in cheap, personal attacks. Sadly, it seems inevitable that it would. The gulf may grow so wide that the subject of 'ufology' will split completely, the 'right wingers' keeping to the name and spirit of Unidentified Flying Objects, the 'liberals' going off to a far wider interpretation, and devising some totally new name in the process. 1979 may well see a complete breaking off of diplomatic relations between the two wings. It is temptingly easy to see a division like this in terms of 'crackpots' and 'rationalists', putting your own interpretation on who's who. I do not think that it will be so simple. There will be crackpots and cranks, and sensible, rational people on both sides. The two groups would be studying different problems from different aspects, and there will be a wide range of opinion, informed or not, on both sides. What basically will have happened will be that the phoney unifying force of lights in the sky will have been removed from a wide range of interlinked phenomena. Some of the lights in the sky may indeed be interplanetary craft. If so, improvement and sophistication of present systems and techniques will probably lead to the isolation and identification of this particular problem. Although not, I think, in the seventies.

A trend of the later years of the sixties that one may confidently predict will continue through the seventies is the growing number of qualified scientists who are finding in the UFO problem many features relevant to their own fields of study. In this connection I may instance Dr Schwarz who is investigating a number of physiological and medical effects of UFO incidents. Most importantly, Dr Schwarz is reporting his findings in medical journals rather than ufological publications. He is not attempting an explanation of the UFO. Rather he is taking it as a subject that provides an opportunity for some relevant study in his particular science. It is this particular kind of scientific involvement, the study of one particular aspect of the phenomenon in comparative isolation, that will grow in the seventies. As a result of this the role of the amateur ufologist will change. At present he does the lot - gathers the material, investigates, analyses, collates, speculates, concludes as he can. In the future many of the more technical and scientific functions may be taken over by the professional. The amateur's new function could be to take the overall view, and try to discern the interconnections between the individual studies of the scientists, and to offer speculation that the professional scientist would not wish to do.

I do not think that the present network of UFO groups, clubs, societies and drinking partners can survive any radical change in the nature of ufology. Although I only have knowledge of the British ufological set-up, I suspect these comments will apply to any other country with an organized UFO study system. Although it is often talked about I cannot foresee any far-reaching moves towards a strongly centred UFO organization, although many of the smaller groups will go to the wall in the quite near future. Nor can I see an end to the internecine warfare that exists within and between British UFO groups. As the decade progresses the type of scientific involvement that I have presaged above will render the amateur group increasingly irrelevant. 1979 may see the demise of the all-in, BUFORA-type organization, and the small local group, with its Constitution, Executive Committee, and the rest of the paraphernalia beloved of the Organization Man. Instead I would anticipate a growth in the quality and reputation of the best UFO journals. They would take over the function of the groups, by providing a forum for the interchange of information, ideas and speculation. By 1979 a journal such as FSR might have evolved into an even more considerable periodical, known, respected and contributed to by a wide scientific community, not just ufologists. Even without any very radical change in the present attitude towards UFO study, I consider it unlikely that the present ramshackle organization of UFO groups is capable of surviving the seventies in any relevant form.

Will there be any change in the UFO phenomenon itself in the seventies? This, of course, is the joker in the pack. Conceivably something could happen (not even ruling out mass landings in Central Park, New York) that would render all our study and speculation redundant at one fell swoop. Such changes as have occurred in the past have been mainly in our attitude towards the problem. Despite this it is possible to see some objective changes in the source material of our study. For instance, the growth of the Man in Black aspect does appear to be an actual statistical growth, as well as the apparent growth that is the result of the increased interest that is being brought to bear on this subject. John Keel predicts that the UFO phenomenon will become increasingly earthbound. I can see no reason to contradict this. More new and unexpected elements will be introduced into, and emerge from, the whole UFO problem, rendering it not only more complex, but considerably more interesting.

I cannot see the answers coming in the seventies. I do not think they are what we should be looking for yet. We will not start getting any answers until we have found out a lot more questions.

A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE SIXTIES

by John Harney

There was a lull in UFO activity at the beginning of the decade and this coincided with a lull in my interest in the subject. My attention had first been drawn to the flying saucers in 1952, by the headlines about the great Washington flap. Later I had joined the Flying Saucer Club but, being a schoolboy at that time, my activities were restricted to corresponding with like-minded people and reading as much of the literature as possible. On one occasion I went to a meeting of the now defunct Wigan Flying Saucer Group. Members present at this memorable event were the Chairman, his wife, and the Hon. Treasurer. The highlight of the evening was the playing of a long tape recording of the Chairman, with a heavy cold, reading extracts from George Adamski's books.

In 1965 I joined the Merseyside UFO Research Group, which had been founded by Alan Rawlinson in 1963.

It was at the MUFORG meetings that I first saw Alan Sharp. On one occasion he gave us a lecture during which he whittled away at the UFO evidence and arguments in a manner which seemed to out-Menzel Menzel. The members could barely restrain themselves from hissing at him, as at the villain in a Victorian melodrama.

During 1965 Alan Rawlinson produced a bulletin on behalf of the Group. At the end of that year I took it over and in February, 1966, the first issue of the notorious MUFORG Bulletin descended on the doormats of ufologists throughout the land.

Reaction was generally favourable to the first few issues, although some readers seemed to form the impression that I was a teenager and wrote appropriately patronising letters. These people were disillusioned when they received patronising replies.

In our second issue Paul Hopkins wrote of his impressions of an International Get-Acquainted Programme lecture in Manchester. I published it with some misgivings. It contained such comments as: "The lights went out and the little screen was filled by the figure of a grotesque humanoid. Is this what the space intelligences look like? Oh, sorry! It is Adamski out of focus." Surprisingly, a number of readers wrote to say they thought the article was very funny, so we pressed on with the provocative material and the sense of humour of some of them began to show signs of strain.

Some of our comments evoked angry letters from readers. The choicest of these, when read out at MUFORG meetings, reduced the members to shrieks of uncontrollable mirth.

In addition to these, the Bulletin brought us some very interesting and informative correspondents, notably Robert A. Stiff, of Oklahoma City, who wrote a large number of fascinating letters until the MIB "silenced" him.

Towards the end of 1966 we got even more controversial. In September I went to the BUFORA Northern Conference in Bradford and heard Mr Arthur Shuttlewood holding forth for two solid hours about the Warrinster phenomena. My scathing review of this event, in the October, 1966, issue of the Bulletin, ~~was~~ brought two indignant letters in support of Shuttlewood for publication in the December issue.

However, in that December issue we really excelled ourselves. Alan Sharp wrote a lyrical piece, "Moonlight at Warrinster", which practically suggested that observers there were victims of their own overwrought imaginations. We also published reviews of the BUFORA Annual General Meeting, written by Dave Hughes and Paul Hopkins. Both reviews were highly critical, with plenty of sarcastic comments. I must admit, though, that Hopkins puzzled me at the time by complaining in his write-up that he had to pay 3/- for "temporary membership" in order to be admitted. I had also attended the meeting, but I just walked straight into the hall, assuming that the people clustered around the table were merely intent on buying the UFO books and magazines inevitably offered for sale at such events!

These reviews resulted in some "more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger" letters from BUFORA officials and a great shouting match at the January, 1967, MUFORG meeting, which sought to establish whether or not the comments in the December issue were justified. The shouting died down after about half-an-hour and the result was generally agreed to be a draw.

In the February, 1967, issue of the Bulletin Alan Sharp reviewed Leonard G. Cramp's "anti-gravity" thesis, "Piece for a Jig-Saw". This book cited the Charlton Crater and other, similar formations as physical evidence for the reality of UFOs. Mr Sharp pointed out in his review, as he had done on several previous occasions, that all the evidence indicated a lightning strike as the most likely cause of the crater. However, "physical evidence" for UFOs is hard to come by in this country and logical explanations for such as cones to light are, therefore, unpopular. Consequently, although the Charlton Crater has been discussed in the UFO literature a number of times since, no mention can be found of Mr Sharp's prosaic explanation, merely a lot of inane waffle about a three-legged spaceship with a retractable spike sticking out underneath it.

In February, 1967, MUFORG moved its meeting place from the Free Church Centre, Tarleton Street, in the centre of Liverpool, to rooms out in Dingle, which had been redecorated by members of the Group. As these rooms were for the exclusive use of the Group, the move should have had a stimulating effect but in reality it proved to be the beginning of the end. Dingle was too far from the city centre to be conveniently accessible to several members and, later, a prolonged bus strike caused a further drop in attendances.

Another worry of MUFORG officials from time to time was when the local press expressed an interest in the Group's activities and asked permission to send reporters and photographers along to meetings in order to provide material for feature articles. A few of the members had some pretty crackpot notions buzzing around in the empty spaces inside their heads and the prospect of seeing their vapourings in print associated with the Group made the Committee wince. So it was decided to keep the press at arm's length.

Meanwhile the Condon investigation was in progress. In the April, 1967, issue I wrote in the editorial: "Anyone who expects an unequivocal statement that the UFOs are interplanetary is surely being a little naive, to say the least." and "...nobody should be surprised if they eventually issue a rather non-committal statement - probably urging further investigation." As is now well known, Condon urged further investigations, in the case of any scientist having a specific idea to follow up. Also, if we actually read the report we will see that it is inconclusive, as predicted.

On May 27, 1967, Alan Sharp and I descended on Warrinster. It was my first visit to that pleasant little town. We booked accommodation at the Farmer Giles Guest House and soon learned of the delights to come, as Ken Rogers and Nigel Stephenson were also

staying there. (In those days, kiddies, Nigel Stephenson was the BUFORA Research Director.) The story of that weekend was told by Alan Sharp and me in an article entitled "Report on a Visit to Warminster", in the June, 1967, issue of MUFORG Bulletin. Our assessment of the situation was somewhat sceptical, so we were delighted when it was reprinted in Flying Saucer Review, "encouragez les autres". So far as we can gather, though, the others were not encouraged and the world's leading UFO journal suffered a slight drop in circulation, which soon recovered when readers realized that they did not want to miss anything even more amazing than "The Most Amazing Case of All", (the Villas Boas story) which would very likely appear in the next issue after their subscriptions ran out.

To return to Warminster. On the Sunday evening (May 28) a number of ufologists were drinking in the "Bunch of Grapes". Suddenly, the door was flung open and in rushed Ken Rogers, crying: "He's had a physical contact! He's had a physical contact!" "Oh, you naughty boy!" exclaimed the lady behind the bar, perhaps misunderstanding him.

We soon discovered that "he" was Arthur Shuttlewood and heard the story of how he had been visited by an "Aenstrian" man that very afternoon. And while this momentous event had been taking place we were only a few hundred yards away! (For Mr Shuttlewood's account of this incident, see his book, "Warnings from Flying Friends".)

During the summer of 1967 a great UFO flap got under way. Most of the local sightings were rather vague, but there was a particularly interesting report from Hindley, Lancashire, where a large, glowing, cone-shaped object had been seen. I made a preliminary visit and gathered some extra details. Then later another trip was undertaken. When we finally got going, the members of the expedition included myself, Alan Sharp, Paul Hopkins and his girl friend (now his wife), his brother Nicholas, Dave Hughes and Ron Donnelly. We set out in a convoy of vehicles comprising a car, a bubble car, a van and a scooter. When we arrived at the site of the alleged UFO events we could only unearth one witness, who was interviewed by Alan Sharp and myself. We then joined the supernumary members of the expedition on an adjacent slag heap, over which the UFO was said to have hovered. There we amused ourselves for some time by taking photographs of one another, digging for fossils and causing miniature landslides.

When this began to pall we set off for St Helens where we had a fish and chip supper, followed a little later by an agreeable couple of jars. We finally finished up conducting a sort of skywatch on a hilltop, where Paul Hopkins busily twiddled with a piece of sophisticated-looking, home-made electronic equipment, with impressive looking flashing lights on it. This gadget was for detecting meteors entering the earth's atmosphere, or something like that. A good time--to quote the old cliché--was had by one and all.

In November, 1967, MUFORG were hosts to the BUFORA Northern Conference. It was not an unqualified success. During the morning a Blood Donor session was taking place on the same premises, causing hilarious confusion to blood donors and ufologists. A television team was also in attendance, seeking out suitably zany people with which to film interviews.

The main speakers were Charles Bowen and Anthony Durham, who both gave interesting and informative lectures. The other lecture of the day was well turned up by Lionel Beer, in the December, 1967, issue of Spacelink. He wrote: "After the tea interval, W. Skellan of D.I.G.A.P. talked about the mechanical implications of UFOs. Amongst his props was a tyreless bicycle wheel, which he revolved a few times. This produced a noticeable scraping of chairs, particularly amongst the Cambridge University Group."

Lionel also wrote: "Although the conference was rated a success, one expected greater things in view of the high-handed criticism of the 1966 A.G.M., which appeared in MUFORG Bulletin." Touche, as they say.

Eventually, I decided to resign from MUFORG and produce an

independent UFO bulletin. Accordingly, the last issue of MUFORG Bulletin was published in October, 1967. Alan Sharp agreed to be Science Editor of the new publication and the first issue of Merseyside UFO Bulletin appeared early in 1968. As a result your editor was interviewed by a reporter from the Debington News, who wrote a delightful feature, entitled "John, the Sceptical Saucer Spotter". I also recorded an interview on BBC Radio Merseyside.

The new bulletin was successful, but the great flap of 1967 had died down and there was very little material of local interest available to us. Eventually John Rimmer joined us and provided much interesting and thought-provoking copy. Meanwhile, MUFORG had abandoned their premises in Dingle and returned to the Free Church Centre. We began to attend their meetings and found that they had a new treasurer, Elaine Wash, who found herself to be the only active female member of the Group. She finally resigned from the Group and joined our team because, as she said, the members spent the meetings discussing motor cars and obscure electrical gadgets, though UFOs were occasionally mentioned. The Merseyside UFO Group is now defunct.

The career of MUF0B to date has been very uneventful, except that we had the honour of having an article about the MIB reprinted in Flying Saucer Review. This did not produce any sinister visitations or bizarre telephone calls, but we were suitably awed when we received a letter from none other than John Keel himself!

For me, then, the sixties closed quietly, as they had begun. I hope the seventies will prove to be more eventful.

A RECENT SKYWATCH AT WARMINSTER

by John Harney

On the evening of January 3, 1970, Alan Sharp and I attended the regular Saturday night skywatch on Cradle Hill, Warminster.

The night was frosty, but cloudy at first, with only a few stars visible now and again. As we reached the gate, we could hear the party of watchers walking towards us down the road from the guardhouse. Mr Shuttlewood came over and spoke to us and we asked him about the significance of the spot known as Heaven's Gate, on the Longleat estate. He told us that one of the usual "breaking points" for Cradle Hill UFOs (i.e. the part of the sky in which they first appear) was on a line with Heaven's Gate. He repeated his opinion that it might be a place where different dimensions met. (1) It was also reputed to be the meeting place of an all-male coven of witches. There was some talk of strange smells and atmospheres noticed by observers on Cradle Hill and at Heaven's Gate.

Eventually most of us, including Mr Shuttlewood, set off up the road to the guardhouse. As we passed the copse on our left we were told that horses refused to go near it. We continued to walk for a few hundred yards on to the ranges. On our way back we decided to investigate the copse. An unidentified odour was noticed immediately we entered it and, after much sniffing, Alan Sharp traced it to a barn full of hay, just outside the copse. With that little mystery solved we resumed our walk back to the gate where the cars were parked.

By now, the sky was clearing and Mr Shuttlewood told us to watch the Plough, which was behind us as we walked down the road. We walked on, glancing back now and again, but Arthur hung back and was soon lost to view. Suddenly, when we were about half way to the gate, there was an outbreak of exclamations from members of the party. A bright, flickering, orange light was seen somewhere up near the Cradle Hill copse. Most of us saw it. One or two people leapt over the barbed wire fence and raced off in its general direction.

"It's like somebody lighting a cigarette," I said. Someone else said that it looked like "rapid Morse".

People shouted to Arthur, asking had he seen it. An

affirmative answer floated faintly back on the frosty air. However, when he rejoined us he said he thought at first that we had seen what he had seen, which was an object moving horizontally across the lower part of the Plough. The object was something like a shooting star, except that it flashed on and off.

Meanwhile, people were scrambling over the barbed wire fence and running up to the Cradle Hill copse. Less energetic watchers strolled down to the gate. I eventually joined the party up by the copse. The sky was quite clear now and many meteors were seen. The strange light was generally agreed to have been someone lighting a cigarette.

We were told that, before we arrived that evening, a strong smell of sulphur was noticed on Cradle Hill, near the gate. It seemed to be wafting from the direction of the copse and it persisted for about a quarter of an hour. We were unable to explain this odour, as we had also been baffled by the experience of John Rimmer, when he and I visited Warminster last September. On that occasion he became aware of a smell, "like scented soap", which he detected on Cradle Hill in an area extending from the gate to about 80 yards down the road. The strange thing about it was that not one of the ~~other~~ other people present was able to detect it.

Finally, back at the gate, the skywatch seemed to be coming quietly to a close, as the frost grew more penetrating. Mr Shuttlewood shook hands and said goodnight. Suddenly he turned and pointed:

"Look, over there!"

"Where, where?" everyone shouted.

Our gaze was directed to Battlesbury Hill, where we made out a faint light twinkling just above it. Mr Shuttlewood and some others thought it was moving up rather rapidly. Perhaps it was the same thing as a rather puzzling object which had been seen in the same direction during a BUFORA skywatch last June? However, the light soon shone out clearly and steadily and Alan Sharp quickly identified it as the star Arcturus.

Mr Shuttlewood conceded this, but it certainly seemed to some of us that it rose rather rapidly at first over the crest of Battlesbury. As the star rose higher, the group of watchers broke up and drifted away down the hill.

M e r s e y s i d e U F O B u l l e t i n

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Letters to the Editor, for publication in this Bulletin, are always welcome. To avoid misunderstandings or unnecessary correspondence, letters intended for publication should be clearly marked "For Publication".

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